



OYMT REVIEW

Call(ed) To Action

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'"

Isaiah 6:8



To show our appreciation to our stockholders and supporters who helped make the Orthodox Your Mission Team ASP trip to Tennessee possible this past July, we cordially invite you to join one of our appreciation events and enjoy some delicious homemade food.

You'll see a slideshow of our trip and hear from the members of our team about the amazing experiences we had on our mission trip.

We hope you can make it!

PHOTO ALBUM: If you cannot attend, please view our photo album at www.oymt.info. Or on Facebook/Instagram @oymt1.

Stockholder Appreciation Events

Presentations will be held at the following parishes after liturgy:

Sunday Sept. 23

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church
74 Joes Hill Road
Danbury, CT 06811

Sunday Sept. 30

St. John's Orthodox Church
364 Mill Hill Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06610

Sunday Oct. 7

St. Barbara
Greek Orthodox Church
480 Racebrook Road
Orange, CT 06477

Sunday Oct. 21

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church
46 Seymour Street
Yonkers, NY 10701

All are welcome!

One Big Week In Trade, TN

This year the Orthodox Youth Mission Team (OYMT) took a giant leap. We opened up our team to parishes beyond our local area and ended up filling an entire Appalachian Service Project (ASP) center in Trade, TN. Our group of 59 youth and adult leaders was led by Father Luke Mihaly of Holy Trinity in Danbury, CT and Fr. Andrew Fetchina from St. John the Baptist in Rahway, NJ. Team members came from parishes in CT, NY, NJ, AL, GA and MD--11 parishes from 3 jurisdictions: American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese, Orthodox Church in America and The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. We were also very happy to have Pres. Renee Ritsi, Teams Associate Director & Healthcare Coordinator from the Orthodox Christian Mission Center, join us again. It was truly a unique opportunity for Orthodox high school and college youth to come together across multiple jurisdictions to serve Christ in a mission experience.

Our team assisted 7 families. Porches and ramps were built, walls and ceilings painted, bathrooms and floors installed, drainage ditches dug and other work done--all with the goal of making homes "warmer, safer and drier," which is ASP's mission. In addition to the construction work, the team participated in many social, cultural and devotional activities at the center. After a week of hard work, the team enjoyed some fun and fellowship with a visit to Hershey Park. We were blessed to be able to bookend our trip with visits to two other parishes. On the way down we celebrated Divine Liturgy with Fr. Nick Galanopoulos and the parishioners at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Roanoke, VA and on the way home we joined Fr. Jeff Zais and his parish, St. Michael's in St. Clair, PA. We received a very warm welcome and exceedingly gracious hospitality at both parishes.

This is OYMT's 8th year and we are grateful to our Lord for this amazing opportunity to make Him present by serving others and to all of you for your prayers and ongoing support.

Special Thanks to our Generous Team Godparents:

William Booth
Lorraine Fedyna
Pani Bethany Mihaly
Napoleon and Dianne Tsilfoglou

Reflections

George Antonellis--ASP is by far the most rewarding experience that I have had in my life. Our center staff was very welcoming and throughout the week we shared stories and did activities to bond and help deepen our faith in God. In addition, the families we served were very loving and caring. Within the first hour of knowing them, they opened up to us and shared stories about their life. All of the families were so sweet that I genuinely wanted to do the work so we could help them as much as possible. I made connections with everyone I met. During the week in Tennessee, I could feel God was there guiding us and giving us strength to help our families. Preparing for starting college this fall, I have been scared because I don't know what's going to come. However, through my several years of volunteering with ASP and OYMT, I have learned that God will always guide us in the right direction.

Luke Berner--This week was amazing! I'm so glad I was able to help spread the word of God by relationship and construction to Miss Janice's family. Throughout the course of this week, I became good friends with all of her family. We were both welcoming and we both wanted each other to be happy. At the center, I loved all the devotionals and activities that took place. I think that they brought us all closer to God. I'm really happy that everyone loved their families and got to spend the week with them. At the picnic, seeing all the families there and smiling made my day. Even though things at home may be going bad for them, they were all so positive and had a blast at the family picnic. The next day, we finished our project at our home and just seeing how grateful Miss Janice was, I could see God shining inside of her. Also, all the friendships that I made on this trip I will keep close to my heart for the rest of my life! Everyone was so welcoming and was working to get closer to Christ by spreading His word and helping others. I just want to thank everyone for making this a great week and a great first year for me!

Kallista Berner--This was my first year doing ASP and it was an amazing experience. At first, I was a little bit nervous because I wasn't sure what to expect. However, everyone was very welcoming and after being there for just a little bit, I felt very comfortable and at home. The center was beautiful. At the work site our crew didn't really click at first but by the end of the week we all became friends. My crew had to work on two rooms. There was a lot of work to be done, but by the end of the week, we accomplished everything we needed to.

Overall, ASP was a great experience and I'm glad that I decided to do it. I will definitely be back for many more years to come.

Gia Dalakas--ASP, to say the least, was an experience that I will remember forever. I didn't realize going into this that it would mean so much to me. I knew that many of my friends from church were doing it, so they told me to do it as well. That's the main reason why I decided to try it, and that was probably one of the best decisions I've ever made. I love the new relationships, and countless memories made. The look on my family's face, seeing the transformations of their home will be something I will never forget. Doing ASP is without a doubt is one of the most eye-opening experiences, and one of the biggest blessings I have ever encountered.

Adrian Guerrero--This was my first experience with ASP. I liked when we were busy. We did many activities all the time, and it was very rare we weren't doing something. Overall, I had some fun this week keeping busy.

Alexis Klimaszewski--This was my fifth trip with OYMT, and fourth with ASP. Each time I spend a week at ASP, I come away with a much stronger understanding of myself and my relationship with God. There have been years in the past where I was struggling with my faith, and it was ASP that helped me figure everything out. My experiences with ASP have helped me to understand that faith, in the words of our fearless leader Susan, is a living thing that one must always be working on. After realizing in Alaska last summer my desire to pursue a life filled with mission work, I have been considering applying for an ASP staff position next summer. Countless times this week God revealed to me that pursuing something like this is what I am meant to do. I am unsure of the future, but once again my week with OYMT and ASP has re-centered me, reminded me of my deep passion and calling for mission work, and helped me to draw closer to God and better understand my faith. I will always be eternally grateful for the last 5 years with the OYMT.

Andreas Lolis--This was my first year on ASP, but I can guarantee it won't be my last. Through this mission, my eyes were opened and I was able to see another part of the world while strengthening my relationship with Christ. While I was frequently challenged throughout the trip with unfamiliar food, uncomfortable sleeping quarters, and a less-than-ideal bathroom situation, this week was among the most spiritually rewarding experiences of my life. ASP allowed me to develop relationships with both my fellow

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volunteers and the homeowners whom I served. The relationships I built are what strengthened my faith and my knowledge that God is present in my life. For this reason, I highly recommend ASP to all, youth and adults alike, regardless of skill level or experience.

Kalliopi Maniatis--This year was my first year at ASP and it was just amazing! The staff was so nice and they made everything fun. I couldn't have asked for anything better, the family was so welcoming and involved in the projects. They just opened up their home to us and let these unexperienced teenagers work on it when they could've fixed it better themselves. The home owner George didn't hide all day and he worked with us rather than just watching us. On the last day he woke up early and put the stairs on the deck. He knew he could've done this job better himself but he wanted to teach us how to build things as well. He would nonstop thank us for the work we are doing for him and his family. It just felt good to do something for someone else for once. The boy living in the house said he normally would just hide away in his room when other crews came but one day we took him out to lunch and he said how he actually wanted to spend time with us.

Ellie Maniatis--My first year at ASP was an incredible experience. I felt well prepared going into the trip. I felt extremely welcomed to the center the second we arrived and met the staff. The staff did a great job of ensuring we had a good week. I absolutely loved getting the opportunity to work for Miss Linda and make an impact on her life. My work crew meshed really well together. I think this program is incredible! I'm so excited to come back on another trip next year.

Ted Maniatis--ASP is something that I will remember for the rest of my life. Over the years I have come to meet so many kind-hearted people. I have God moments nearly every day, which I cherish. This year I had the privilege of getting a house with a big family and lots of animals which really helped me reflect back to my time in Alaska. It gave me a warm reminder of what the Orthodox faith was all about and helped me to make new friends along the way.

Giovanni Panagiotakis--This was my first year in ASP, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Nervous at first, I adapted to my new surroundings at the center, and at the work site. I accepted that not everything would be clean and simple, and by doing this, my experience was much better. I learned a lot about construction work which will help me in the future. I also felt that I became closer to God this week. Whether it was on the work site with our homeowner, outside on the field with my friends, or just

simply praying throughout the day. For the first time I experienced true poverty, and though I am very proud and content to have greatly helped my homeowner, this has given me a hunger to pursue more trips like this. I felt that the center was very accommodating and the staff were so welcoming, happy and kind. Overall, I am pleased to have answered my call to action and have made a home warmer, safer and drier. I can't wait until next year.

Ana Radcliff--In the beginning, I wasn't planning to go on ASP this year. However, last minute I changed my mind and it was one of the greatest decisions I have ever made. This week of ASP was one of the best compared to the two other years. I have done ASP for three years and last year I went on the Alaska trip, which was amazing. Anyway, I worked with an amazing crew. Both adult leaders were first years and at first I was hesitant. I was afraid that my crew wouldn't get anything done. I was proven wrong. I honestly had the best crew and we were able to accomplish a whole porch! My family were the sweetest and had such a big story to tell. One of our homeowners used to do construction and decided to do our steps on the porch because he woke up early and was bored. Overall this week on ASP was an amazing experience and I am so glad I decided to join the group last minute and so thankful for Susan, Beth and Fr. Luke for letting me come.

Grace Radcliff--I loved Alaska, but this year's trip was absolutely amazing. I could have not asked for a better family. The lady of the house was Janice. She has 10 grandchildren and we got to meet 5 of them this week and oh my goodness...all of them were so sweet. Throughout the week my crew was either hanging out with the kids and pets (they had 5 puppies), painting or sanding the hallway/bathroom, or stumping the ceiling. My crew was kind and funny and worked well together. Now, I want to talk about Shaylyn for a bit. How can I explain how much I love her?? Such a fun and exciting child yet she can also be a little rough, mainly because she is autistic. She is in need of a service dog and on Thursday her mom found a place that will train a dog to her needs. The joy in Whitney's voice almost made me cry out of joy with her--they've been looking for months. A dog is \$1200-\$1400 and I want to help raise money for the service dog for little Shaylyn. During this week I gave so much love to her. I want to continue giving to her and her family. I would love to see them again and of course continue ASP.

Katerina Spanolios--This was probably one of the most eye-opening weeks of my life. I wasn't really sure what to expect. I bought an air mattress, gloves and a tool belt for my upcoming adventure. When we first got to the center, I was extremely uncomfortable. I had never been in a situation like this before. However, once I met my family

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and started working, I became extremely comfortable and began calling the center home. Meeting tons of new people from new churches was overwhelming in the beginning, but by the end of the week it was the most comforting feeling. We all came to Tennessee for the same reasons: to help others and to deepen our relationship with our lord and savior Jesus Christ. Meeting my family and working at the homes, I was so incredibly humbled. I realized how truly blessed I am. Even though the family didn't have lots of money or material things, they felt as though they had everything they needed. They showed me the importance of love, kindness, and perseverance. Not only did this trip make me appreciate what God has blessed me with, but it has strengthened my relationship with Him.

Melissa Tartaglio--After 5 years of being a part of OYMT, I'm glad to say that each year gets better. This year has by far been the most rewarding trip I've been on. My homeowners were incredibly generous; making sure that we ate toast and apple butter at the start of our work day. You couldn't talk to the wife without her reminding you how thankful she was and how blessed she had been for us to be there. The house I worked on wasn't the only reason this trip was so amazing. The center staff were the best I've had. I was able to have genuine conversations with everyone. You could tell they really cared. All in all, this trip has left me wanting more. Now I just have to decide between another OYMT trip, ASP staff, or a mission with OCMC.

Annie-Jorden Tomaszek--This past year was one of my favorites on ASP. The staff was incredible which made all the difference. But my favorite reason this year was the best is the homeowners. They came outside and talked with us all day. And from what we heard from other people, their owners were awesome too. It really made a difference to know that I was doing something special for someone. Overall, this year's trip was amazing. I am also glad the newcomers loved it too.

AJ Villa--This was my first ASP trip and it was absolutely amazing. I loved the work and meeting the family and new friends. On my way there I was pretty nervous and a little scared, but people made me feel really welcome. The trip was so much fun that I didn't even want to leave.

Kaitleen Villa--On the way to the center I was nervous and hoping that the week would go quickly. When I got to the center and met everybody, I felt so comfortable. As the week went on and I became closer to people and the staff, I wished that the week would slow down. The feeling of doing something and have it impact and matter so much to others is the best. I wish I didn't have to leave. ASP has opened up my view on so many things.

Eleni Wagner--This was my first year doing ASP and it was the most amazing experience ever. I first signed up for ASP because of my brother. I was extremely nervous and didn't know what to expect. However, when I arrived at the center I was no longer nervous. Being in Tennessee was very calming and everybody there was very nice. The family that I was serving was also very nice. The homeowner tried to help us whenever he could, and always offered food and drinks. It was such an incredible week working with the family and also working with my work crew whom I grew closer to as the week went on. My relationship with my friends also grew stronger. The trip brought me closer to the kids from the Danbury group and I also managed to make friends with the kids from NJ and GA. I can't wait to do ASP again next year.

Robbie Wagner--This year's ASP trip was a surprisingly new experience. I have gone on a regular ASP trip in the summer of 2016 and then in 2017 I took an even bigger leap and went on a service project to Alaska. So that being said, I truly believed that I had seen it all, but this year's ASP trip proved me wrong. On Monday, which was the first day of our service to the homeowners, I started to see how much my family that I was helping would change me. First off, the father of the house my crew was working on was more welcoming than any homeowner I had worked with in the past. He would not stop telling us how thankful he was that we volunteered to work on HIS house. This homeowner was very handy with construction, and I learned so much because this man was excited to teach us the volunteers how to spackle, build, cut, etc. Along with the family I served, this year was also special because it was the first time we got other Orthodox groups who believed in the same thing as us to join our group. At our center I was able to connect with almost everybody and get to know them. This was a great experience that I was never able to have on an ASP trip before. I am so happy that I decided to go on ASP again and can't wait to go again.



We're ready for next year!

OYMT will have our own center for an
Appalachian Service Project Trip

July 6-14, 2019

If you are a teen or adult interested in joining us, or you'd like to find out how to form an OYMT crew at your parish, please attend one of our presentations or contact:

Fr. Luke Mihaly padreluke@aol.com

Susan Sulich ssulich@yahoo.com

For more information about our team, visit www.oymt.info
and for the ASP organization, visit www.asphome.org.

Thank you again for supporting us, and we hope you will invest in our success again next year!